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ABSTRACT

By comparing a text that is especially biased with one that is especially free of bias, the understanding and recognition of race and sex bias in history textbooks can be developed. "Your Mississippi" by John K. Bettersworth and "Mississippi: Conflict and Change", edited by Sallis and Loewen, provide examples for such a study. "Your Mississippi" is an example of "mytholized history"; its author has "the tendency to view Mississippi through white eyes, wearing rose colored glasses". "Conflict and Change" on the other hand is "one of the best history books to be found"; it "presents multiracial/multicultural concerns and experiences and honestly describes white racism". This document is intended as a study guide to develop participants' skills in analyzing textbooks. It describes the court issue regarding the adoption of the two texts in Mississippi. It compares the contrasting approaches toward Native Americans, slavery, Reconstruction, Post-Reconstruction, race, migration, industrialization, civil rights, other racial and ethnic groups, and women. Illustrations, wording, and formats are examined and compared, and parallel quotes on the same historical events are utilized. The glossary discusses perspective, myth, ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, isolation, omission, stereotype, characterization, bias, racism, and sexism and how they relate to the approaches taken by some history books. (DS)

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TWO HISTORY TEXTS: A Study in Contrast

NOV 1978

A Study Plan and Lesson Guide

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TWO HISTORY TEXTS: a Study in Contrasts
A study guide and lesson plan

OBJECTIVES: To increase participants' understanding of race and sex bias in history textbooks.

To develop participants' skills in analyzing their own, or any, textbook.

RATIONALE: All textbooks contain some degree of bias. Comparing one that is especially biased with one that is especially free of bias can clarify understanding and analytic skills.

TIME PERIOD: Two to five class periods or one workshop day.

MATERIALS: One essay analysis. One copy of Ten Quick Ways. One copy of Test Your Textbooks. One Glossary. One set of Parallel Quotes.

ACTIVITY: Prior to beginning group activity teacher or facilitator must:

1. Reproduce enough copies of Parallel Quotes so that each group member has a set.

2. Read essay, glossary and all enclosed materials.

3. Teacher/facilitator should open discussion on importance of increasing awareness of racism and sexism in textbooks.

4. Then the glossary definitions should be discussed, using the examples to clarify group understanding. It is not essential for everyone to fully understand or agree at this point, or at any point in this lesson. The aim is always to increase sensitivity and let participants discover and point out nuances, rather than have discussion leader clarify everything.

5. Form small groups, of five or so, and give everyone a copy of the Parallel Quotes and Questions. Each group can discuss all of the questions or a few of them, depending on time for this activity. Each group then reports back to the larger group.

6. Large group discussion.

7. Textbook Analysis: Each participant examines their own textbook, looking for two examples of race or sex bias. They rewrite the biased paragraphs to eliminate the ethnocentrism or sexism. Participants can read their examples and rewrites to the entire class or group.

SAMPLE PAGES

On some plantations the mistress taught the house servants to read and write.

CHAPTER TEN
Life in Old Mississippi

Many people in Old Mississippi practiced the art of good living. Those who could afford it enjoyed the arts of music, literature, painting, and architecture. The others, both black and white, developed a folk culture of their own.

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Your Mississippi

Mississippi and the Nation

Compare Mississippi's personal income with that of other states. Why is Mississippi such a poor state? Discuss in class the historical reasons for this poverty, and refer to previous chapters to back up your analysis.

Wood and wood products are still Mississippi's largest industry.

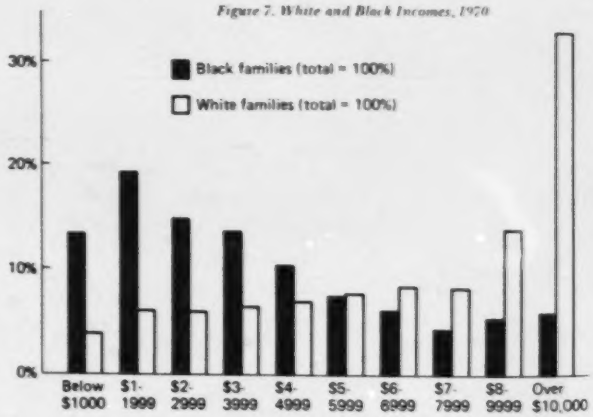
Figure 7 indicates how serious the problem has been. In 1970, one-third of the families in the state had incomes below $4,000. There are not enough jobs, particularly high-paying jobs, to meet the needs of Mississippi's population.

Many of the industries which have come to Mississippi have been in low-paying fields such as lumber, clothing, and paper. Therefore the average wage paid to Mississippi's industrial workers is much lower than the national average. The state needs more high-skill, high-wage jobs, and it is not getting them fast enough.

Lack of education hurts industry.

Poor education may be a key reason. An uneducated worker is usually able to get only a low-paying, unskilled job. Mississippi is now the only state in the nation without a compulsory school-attendance law. In 1970, 40 percent of the adults in the state had less than a ninth-grade education.

Figure 7. White and Black Incomes, 1970



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Mississippi: Conflict and Change

TWO HISTORY TEXTS: A Study In Contrast

A controversy in Mississippi over the state's refusal to approve a new state history textbook for public school use has national implications for educators, students, textbook publishers, Third World groups and those concerned with the issue of censorship.

Mississippi school districts purchase textbooks with state appropriated funds but must choose from books that have been approved for adoption by a state-appointed textbook review committee. The Mississippi History Textbook Committee meets every six years to review texts and can recommend as many as five books for each subject area.

A Mississippi history course is required for all students enrolled in public school and, by custom, is required in many private schools. In 1962, the only text submitted to the review committee was *Mississippi: A History,* written by John K. Bettersworth, a history professor at Mississippi State University. In 1968, his revised *Mississippi: Yesterday and Today* was the only book submitted. In 1974 he presented another revised text, this one titled *Your Mississippi.*

Also submitted in 1974 was a new textbook, *Mississippi: Conflict and Change,* edited by Charles Sallis, a historian at Millsaps College in Jackson, and James W. Loewen, a sociologist at Tougaloo, who collaborated with six authors, students and teachers at the same institutions.

Although the textbook committee could have approved both texts for adoption, they approved only the revised Bettersworth book. A suit has been filed in U.S. District Court by students, teachers and school officials against the Mississippi History Textbook Committee and the Mississippi State Textbook Purchasing Board aimed at forcing the adoption of *Conflict and Change,* along with *Your Mississippi,* so that districts can choose between them. The suit charges that the present and previous textbook rating committees:

> . . . have adopted for use in all history courses taught in Mississippi, only those texts which minimize, ignore or [degrade] the role of blacks and other minorities in the history of the United States and of Mississippi, and which present historical events in a manner sympathetic to principles of racial segregation and discrimination, black inferiority and "white supremacy."

Books Reviewed

The Racism/Sexism Resource Center has carefully reviewed and analyzed each of the books in question. By any reasonable criteria, including those used by the Mississippi review committee, *Conflict and Change* is not only eligible for adoption, but is far superior in format and content to all history textbooks we have seen. In our opinion, not only should *Conflict and Change* have been adopted, but *Your Mississippi* should not have been adopted. It is too distorted, biased, and full of omissions to qualify for use as a history text, and it clearly fails to meet many of the Mississippi committee's major criteria. In contrast, *Conflict and Change*—while not without flaws—is one of the most progressive history textbooks available.

Parents, educators and students concerned about pluralistic education should be concerned about the Mississippi case. While this case is specifically related to the compulsory nature of state history courses in Mississippi, the issue involved is general in that compulsory education laws throughout the nation require students to use textbooks which, to varying degrees, distort realities about Third World peoples, women, working people and/or the processes and forces of social change.

The authors of *Conflict and Change* had great difficulty finding a publisher willing to handle their "controversial" book. A court decision in favor of the plaintiffs would encourage the production of more such books. The book's presentation of multiracial/multicultural concerns and experiences and its honest description of white racism should engender support from all groups sharing these concerns. If this case, which pits such a progressive book against a strikingly inferior one, cannot be won, it will be all the more difficult to win other battles to replace merely mediocre books with better ones.

Myth as History

For those concerned with the increasingly discussed "censorship" question, the issue is two-fold. Firstly, those in control of textbook selection are apparently threatened by a book that deals honestly with Mississippi history and are attempting to suppress it. This represents censorship in its most blatant form. Secondly, should the Bettersworth book be adopted as a "history" text? As the historian Virgil Vogel has noted:

> To draw the curtain over unpleasant happenings in history is not less to be deplored than conscious falsification. The selectivity of the historian is revealing. If omitted events are of a sort which would dampen the impression the writer seeks to create, we are getting historical fiction, for only novelists can take such liberties.

Your Mississippi overtly and covertly reinforces white chauvinism and racism through omission, distortion and falsification of reality. Some will argue that to propose rejection of this book for use as a history text is "reverse censorship." However, the argument is not that the book should be burned, for it could be used constructively as an example of mythologized history. But a state government's approval of such biased propaganda for use in required education programs is untenable. The book is not a balanced history and is not a source of "reliable and accurate basic information" as the Mississippi textbook adoption criteria specify.

Terms like "balanced," "reliable," "accurate," and "honest" are always subjective terms open to interpretation from different perspectives and ideologies. The best we can do is provide youth with materials which present as many viewpoints and as much information as possible. *Conflict and Change* does this; *Your Mississippi* does not. As a supplementary text, the book would be useful, just as *Mein Kampf* would be useful in a course on German history. But for the state to officially sanction and allow the expenditure of state funds collected from all of Mississippi's people on a book that ignores and disparages so many Mississippians and for local districts to choose this book as *the* required Mississippi history text is deplorable. This is the issue that should be challenged in Court.

Focus of Study

In comparing the two books, we examined their formats, illustrations and word usage, as well as their treatment of the cultures and histories of Native Americans, African Americans, other racial and ethnic groups and women in Mississippi. We also

focused on their handling of specific historical periods: slavery, Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction and the civil rights era (1950's-1960's), as well as each book's handling of the interrelationship of race, migration and industrialization and their relationship to Mississippi's development.

NATIVE AMERICANS

The books differ sharply in their approach to Mississippi's Native Americans: Choctaws, Chickasaws, Natchez and others.

Stereotypes, Eurocentric viewpoints and loaded, racist language are all evident in *Your Mississippi*. The student is told about "tribes" that "roam" or go on the "warpath"; "looked forward to going to a happy hunting ground after death"; "knew little about nature in its scientific aspects though they learned much by observation"; had practices which "sound foolish to us"; and were "discovered" and "found" by Europeans. Native American men are "braves." "Many places and things in Mississippi have funny sounding names. Many of these we got from the Indians. . . . Most of the English names are easy ones." ("Funny" to whom? "Easy" for whom?) "The daily life of the Natchez Indian was calm, except when the tribe was on the warpath or when the task of providing food was serious." (When is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this read: "The daily life of the Germans was calm, except when the tribe was blitzkrieging or when . . .") Although the Natchez "women were regarded as attractive, and so were the men . . . we may be sure that certain peculiar practices of the Natchez Indians would hurt their looks from our point of view today." ("Peculiar" to whom?) Choctaw men "were small in stature, but handsome and well-built. The women usually became fat as they grew older." (Who is setting standards?) The Chickasaws "were perhaps the smartest and the bravest of all the Mississippi Indian tribes [and their] houses were clean and neat." (Whose stamp of approval?)

The Chickasaws were "by far the most warlike tribe in Mississippi." This is more Eurocentrism. Bettersworth previously stated that knowledge about the Native groups dates from contact with the Europeans. Naturally, the Indians considered Europeans to be invaders, and some fought determinedly for their homelands. Obviously, Europeans considered those who fought them to be "warlike."

About the Natchez, Bettersworth tells us:

> The Natchez Indian society was anything but simple and democratic. The tribe was ruled by an all-powerful chief, the Great Sun. There were two main social classes. The upper class had three subdivisions: the Suns (relatives of the chief), the Nobles, and the Honored People. The lower class, who formed a single group, were known as "Stinkards," a name which they could not be called to their faces. Tribal law required a member of the upper class to marry a person from the Stinkard class.

Conflict and Change states that while the Great Sun was very powerful, "the people did not submit to him without question. An elected council of advisers helped him make decisions, and they had a great deal of influence. The Suns who headed each town [and could be women] also held much power and could sometimes oppose the Great Sun." What then made the Natchez "anything but . . . democratic"? Was it their caste/class system? Yet, as Bettersworth notes, Natchez law "required a member of the upper class to marry a person from the Stinkard class," and it was the woman of that pairing whose class determined the offspring's class. This complex system for insuring social mobility, while still maintaining elitism, *was* undemocratic—by our terms. But was it any less democratic than Mississippi society which, until recently, allowed *no* social, political or economic mobility for Black people and was virtually controlled by the male sex. Bettersworth's double standards are obvious, for he termed Mississippi's turn-of-the-century society—an age of Jim Crow, segregation and disenfranchisement—" . . . a democratic age, whether you spelled democratic with a big D or a little d." (chapter 14, Government of the People)

Cultural Bias

Conflict and Change gives a fuller description of Native American societies, attempts to present them as "legitimate" on their own—rather than European—terms, and more honestly portrays the "destruction" caused by European invaders. [See Parallel Quotes, #2.] The text states that "judging another culture by your own standards is a kind of bias" and that much of the information in the book comes from "white Europeans and Americans, who did not understand what they saw." It is further noted: "Some people have made the mistake of thinking that the Indians of North America were all alike . . . differences between Choctaws and Natchez, for example, were greater than those between French and Germans."

Conflict and Change sometimes uses the term "tribe," but often uses "nations" or "groups," as well as "Native American" and "non-Indians." However, some ethnocentrism is reflected when Natchez society is referred to as "unusual," and in one instance as "very unusual," because of its matriarchal structure. Matriarchal societies are not "very unusual," except in the western world.

Conflict and Change's discussion of Christian missionaries is not full enough. The book states that the missionaries' conversion ". . . efforts, along with other European influences, gradually undermined the Indians' faith in their own beliefs and religion." It also tells us that they ". . . sincerely believed that Indians would live in hell forever, if they died not believing in Christ." Whatever the missionaries' sincerity, they were still destroying the valid beliefs and religions of other people.

"Indian Massacres"

Bettersworth continually refers to "Indian massacres" and "Indian troubles." He provides *no* information on the experiences of the Choctaws and the Chickasaws during their forced removal to "Indian Territory" in Oklahoma. Yet he suggests, at the end of chapter 7, under "Things To Do": "You are a Choctaw Indian (or a Chickasaw). Tell the story of your westward journey to Indian Territory." Students would be more able to perform this exercise if they read *Conflict and Change*, since that book describes the agonizing deportation. It also includes an annotated bibliography of books for further reading on Native Mississippians, while Bettersworth leaves students without such information.

Chapter 3 of *Your Mississippi* and chapter 4 of *Conflict and Change* deal with the period of European "exploration." Bettersworth partially describes De Soto's cruelty and pillage, yet has him "killing" Indians, while Chief Tuscaloosa "planned to *massacre* the Spaniards." One of the "accomplish-

ments" of De Soto's expedition was that he had left the Indians "the white man's diseases, against which they had no immunity. Therefore, when the next Europeans arrived 130 years later, there were only one-fifth as many Indians left." (Accomplishment, indeed!)

Although *Conflict and Change* mentions "Columbus' 'discovery' of America," a marginal note asks, "Why is 'discovery' in quotes?" After briefly describing De Soto's expedition, his cruelty and the attempts of Native nations to drive the expedition out, the book asks readers to think about: "What difference would it have made if De Soto had never come to Mississippi? Read to the end of this chapter for evidence to support your answer. Should this book have given De Soto as much space as it did?" This is a refreshing approach for a textbook to take with students.

Bettersworth's treatment of Native peoples in Mississippi is perhaps summed up when he writes, without qualification:

> The Indian cessions opened Mississippi for settlement. At a banquet staged in Natchez in October 1830, President Andrew Jackson was praised as a man who "found our territory occupied by a few wandering Indians. He will leave it to the cultivation of thousands of grateful freemen."

While we find *Conflict and Change* superior to *Your Mississippi* in its treatment of Native Americans, both books need careful review for cultural authenticity and historical accuracy by Native people with expertise on the region's Native cultures.

SLAVERY

Bettersworth's treatment of slavery omits—almost totally—the conditions, feelings, treatment and resistance of the Black people held in bondage. "Slave Treatment" receives a total of four paragraphs, and these minimize the brutality of the system and accentuate the mitigating factors. "While there were a number of cases of cruelty to slaves, public opinion and state law tried to see that slaves were not mistreated." "A number of cases" is minimizing enough, but the rest of the section contains such information as, "The Slave Code of the Constitution of 1832 was intended to protect the slave" and, "The courts were supposed to look after the interests of the slaves." The latter is followed by descriptions of two court cases that were decided in favor of Black people held in bondage. While admitting that these cases were exceptions, Bettersworth fails to provide information on the rule, and thus leaves a distorted impression with the reader.

He does not discuss the brutality and inhumanity of the *system* of human slavery, but rather places the onus on individual overseers, even stating that, "Plantation owners cautioned their overseers against using brutal practices . . ." and the Slave Code of 1832 "required the master to keep all of his slaves in good health and physical well-being from the cradle to the grave." He concludes that, "In general, slaves were treated well or badly on the basis of how good or bad their owner or overseer was." He fails to mention prohibitions against the education of Black people held in slavery, preferring to stress that, "Some slaves who were house servants received an education. . . ."

Contented Slaves

With slavery portrayed in such a benign light, it is not surprising that Bettersworth neglects to discuss the varied resistance of people held in slavery. During his discussion of the Civil War he notes that it "was a perfect time for slaves to revolt. Yet they never did." However, *Conflict and Change* reports a number of such revolts during the war. [See Parallel Quotes, #5.] Bettersworth then states that after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued "to free the slaves in conquered territory [sic], some of the blacks fled to Vicksburg to gain their freedom [but] most of them remained loyal to their owners."

He infers that the system of slavery was just as bad for whites as for Blacks. "Slaves had become so costly that planters often neglected their own families to care for their costly slaves." "Cotton's kingdom had many slaves. Many blacks were its slaves, but, the white man was its slave, too. Life throughout the state was affected by slavery." "The average Mississippian [in antebellum Mississippi], black or white, was not able to enjoy the leisure and luxury of the plantation, the city, or the resort. There was work to do, and much of it was shared." Finally, as the value of people held in slavery rose during the 1840's and 1850's, "The high price of a slave made it even more important that he [sic] be properly cared for. Sometimes the hardest and most dangerous work was done not by slaves but by Irish immigrant day laborers [who] cost their employer nothing except their daily wages."

He laments that "The end of the war brought the final blow to the slave owner, the loss of his slaves. Every able-bodied fieldhand and house servant was worth about two thousand dollars in terms of prewar prices. All this was completely lost." Bettersworth's grieving for the slave owner keeps him from celebrating—even briefly—for the hundreds of thousands who were freed. According to Bettersworth, Black people in bondage made a quick transition from being "loyal" slaves to being "confused" freedpeople, having difficulty adjusting to a whole new way of life and creating the "critical problem" of what was to be done with them.

Another View

Conflict and Change, on the other hand, discusses the social distinctions created by slavery, the development of an ideology justifying slavery, the use of violence and punishment to maintain discipline, the living conditions and family life of people held in slavery and their resistance to oppression. It includes the restrictions imposed on people held in slavery in terms of education, freedom of movement, social contact and legal rights. While discussing how people held in bondage often utilized church meetings as a cover for other activities, the book states that, "Religion also offered hope and consolation to a troubled people." The book fails to mention the view, held by some, that religion was deliberately utilized by the "system" to pacify Black people with hope for a better hereafter, in order to distract them from resistance activities.

Conflict and Change provides much information and analysis of the role of Black people in the South during the Civil War, but then states that "the arming of black soldiers had deep meaning for race relations in Mississippi and America. It would be difficult to return armed soldiers to slavery or to second-class citizenship." Yet, as the book itself later discusses, Black people *were* in fact returned to economic bondage in the South, and were, in both North and South, subjugated as second-class citizens.

Two issues peripheral to slavery and discussed in each book need mention. *Your Mississippi* treats the issue of pre-Civil War tariffs effectively, while *Conflict and Change* is fuzzy. These tariffs were a divisive element prior to the War because they benefited northern industry while hurting the South's trade with Europe. The issue was vital to the South and led to nullification efforts. These efforts, while prompted by more than just the tariff issue, were important in the evolution of American history.

Neither book deals satisfactorily with the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" or the U.S. expropriation of much of Mexico. Each book mentions them as they related to events in Mississippi without any question as to the lack of justification for these actions or their relation to increasing U.S. imperialism.

RECONSTRUCTION

Neither book adequately explains why Black people "came to expect" 40 acres and a mule, although *Conflict and Change* discusses the necessity for freed people to have land. *Conflict and Change* also examines the success of Davis Bend and refers to the government's practice of giving land to homesteaders as examples of what might have been effective post-war policies. Bettersworth simply states that Black people "came to expect more than the bureau could provide." [See Parallel Quotes, #s 6 & 7.]

Bettersworth repeats the most outdated and discredited myths about Reconstruction, ignoring modern scholarship. [See Parallel Quotes, #s 8, 9, 10, 11.] His thesis is that corrupt Black officials and their carpetbagger allies brought the state to fiscal ruin until put in their place by "redeemer democrats," who returned the state to fiscal soundness. This section contains the most blatant stereotyping of Black people. The Klan begins as "a secret social and fraternal club" of the sort that "were very popular at that time." Part of the initiation ritual involved a member riding "across the countryside in bedsheet and hood to serenade his best girl. This frightened the blacks." One can almost picture the superstitious and shaking "colored" man of Hollywood fame, his eyes bulging and teeth chattering, trying to get his feet moving. "Taking advantage of this fear, the Klan turned into a force for controlling the freedmen, especially to frighten them away from voting places." One assumes the Klan simply stood around voting places in their bedsheets—no guns necessary—and Black people were just too scared to approach! This is the book that the Mississippi Textbook Committee considered "consistent with the valid findings of recent research."

POST-RECONSTRUCTION

Bettersworth's treatment of post-Reconstruction Mississippi represents an extreme form of selective historiography. [See Parallel Quotes, #12.] He makes no mention of Jim Crow, segregation or lynching, except for the 1890 Convention at which Black people were disenfranchised. The sharecropping system has been defined by some as placing Black people in economic bondage, but the economic, political and social consequences of this central aspect of Mississippi's post-war economy and race relations is avoided by Bettersworth. In a section labelled "Down on the Farm," he discusses, in three brief paragraphs, the post-war agricultural structure. The first paragraph, titled "The Planters," refers to the whites who lost their land after the war and lived "a hard life." The second paragraph, called "The Blacks," contains no mention of the negative consequences of sharecropping for Black people. The third paragraph, "Small Farmers," discusses the vicious cycle of "crop lien" which trapped farmers and created their dependency on bankers, merchants and absentee landlords. By implication the disadvantaged small farmers were white, since "The Blacks" were discussed in the preceding paragraph.

In contrast, *Conflict and Change* devotes ten pages to analyzing the tenant farm system and contains several references to the subject in other sections. While providing much more information on how the system created economic bondage for Black people, the authors also analyze its effects on white tenants and landlords. The living conditions of share-croppers and the effects of tenancy on migration, industrialization and education are all discussed.

RACE

Conflict and Change is not a book about Black people. It is about Mississippi history and thus information about Black people—what they did and what was done to them—is included throughout the book. To some who are familiar with traditional history books, it may at first appear that the pendulum has swung the other way and that the book over-emphasizes Black people. That view would represent not the reality of the book but the eye of the beholder, whose perception has been conditioned by traditional "white" history books.

In fact, *Conflict and Change* provides much more information about white people in general and about specific white individuals whose actions were significant in Mississippi history, than it presents about Black people. The diversity of white Mississippians—in economic status, attitudes and behaviors—emerges clearly from the book, while in *Your Mississippi* white people are for the most part a generalized mass.

Conflict and Change, like any history text—including *Your Mississippi*—presents a particular perspective on history. However, it also provides information on the viewpoints of diverse groups whose interactions shaped historical events. Thus, students read the words of Theodore Bilbo about not letting "niggers" vote and James Eastland defending segregation, along with those of Fannie Lou Hamer and Tecumseh. They learn of the activities of William J. Simmons and the White Citizens Council as well as Bessie C. Alford and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching.

In its short biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate General and later Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, the book states:

> His life was an incredible combination of hard work, shrewd dealing in the not-quite-honorable professions, brilliant tactics, and racism toward black people. These characteristics, all combined, help explain his success as slave trader, general and planter.

And discussing Blanche K. Bruce, Black U.S. Senator from Mississippi, the book notes:

> . . . Bruce was not concerned solely with the rights of black people. He spoke movingly of the mistreatment of Indians, and, saying he was the representative of "a people who but a few years ago were disqualified from enjoying the privilege of American citizenship," he voted against the Chinese Exclusion Bill. He also worked to allow all Southern whites to vote and helped build better levees along the Mississippi River.

Brotherhood

Bettersworth's perspective on racial issues is summed up when he writes on the aftermath of the civil rights era, "Gradually Mississippians, black and white, found that they could get along together—as they always had." His book's treatment of race distorts, white-washes and omits events and processes which contradict his "togetherness" theme.

In chapter 17, "Modern Mississippi," Bettersworth states: "Mississippi pioneered some new ideas," among which he includes ". . . financial assistance [which] came to Mississippi schools, black and white, from national organizations such as the Peabody Foundation and the Julius Rosenwald Fund." This involvement of outside funding sources was hardly a "pioneering" idea of Mississippi's but was in many instances an attempt by outside foundations to provide some alternative educational opportunity to counteract the "separate and unequal" education provided Black youth by that state. In the same section, Bettersworth writes:

> . . . the postwar era saw progress in the education of blacks. Spurred on partly by a federal threat to abolish segregated school facilities, the state spent millions of dollars to provide separate but equal facilities. Much new construction took place. Beginning in 1946 large appropriations were made by the legislature to assist local schools in their building programs. By 1950 the state-aid project had provided 1,930 new classrooms for whites and 907 for blacks.

Black "Progress"

Although Bettersworth has previously failed to supply information on educational inequities, one still might wonder how providing 1,930 new classrooms for whites and 907 for Blacks could equalize a system in which white education started so far ahead. This distortion of "progress" is further highlighted by an earlier mention that Hugh White, elected in 1952, "put through the legislature a tax program to finance the improvement of black schools." Why the need in 1952, for a Black school improvement program if so much "progress" had been made by 1950? One could possibly deduce that although progress was made in the forties, additional efforts were needed in the fifties to reach the goal of "equal" (though still separate) education. But such chancy deductions would be unnecessary had more background information been provided—and therein lies the crux of the matter.

The problem with Bettersworth's approach is that his omissions and distortions are compounded by his almost total lack of analysis of social, economic and political power and change. Examples of improvement or change, even when not misrepresented, become distorted if isolated from the context of the problem. And Bettersworth fails, generally, to present the historical evolution of problems and their severity at the time of change.

He states that, "Black business leadership failed to develop in the state," and, in the period between Reconstruction and the turn of the century, "Most of the laborers in Mississippi's factories were white men. Many were brought in from the North because Mississippi whites avoided factory work." Neither statement is further explained or analyzed to illuminate the causes of these phenomena. No explanation is given as to why Black people were passed over as whites were brought in. No discussion exists in the book about the divisions between Black and white farmers and workers, caused by white chauvinism, nor of the attempts by some Black and white farmers and workers to overcome this division and unite around common issues.

MIGRATION

Similarly, we read that, "In the 1880's blacks began to leave Mississippi for the North" and after World War II, "Mississippi's economy continued to improve. In spite of this a large number of Mississippians, many of whom were blacks, moved out of the state." These two sentences constitute Bettersworth's less-than-comprehensive treatment of the migration of Black and white Mississippians, of the conditions that were responsible for the migration and of the consequences created by it.

Conflict and Change discusses migration throughout the book, analyzes its causes and discusses its implications for the social, economic and political future of Mississippi. Some examples of its treatment follow. In chapter I, the "Uses of History" and "Errors in the Past" are discussed:

> We can look into the past and see examples of policies that failed, golden opportunities that were not taken. Perhaps we can learn from past errors so that in the future we can make Mississippi a better society.
>
> For example, compared with many other states, Mississippi once had a fairly large and growing population. In 1920 only 22 states had more people than Mississippi. Since then, more people have moved out than moved in, and Mississippi now stands thirtieth in population among the states.
>
> There are reasons for this decline. Once, more than two-thirds of all Mississippians farmed. Over the past four decades, farming has become only a minor source of jobs in Mississippi. Now less than one worker in seven is in agriculture.
>
> This sweeping change called for other changes in the state, changes to encourage new kinds of employment and to cause new ideas to take hold. For a long time, however, new industries were not encouraged to come to Mississippi. . . .
>
> Even today some leaders of the state seem to be afraid of new ideas, afraid of change, afraid of "outsiders." They fail to understand that a state which does not attract other people may not be attractive to its own residents. More than half of the college-educated youth of Mississippi leave the state within three years after their graduation. Mississippi is a beautiful state. Its medium-sized cities, green woodlands, and relatively clean air could support a way of life combining the best of rural and urban America. But policies formed long ago, mistakes made in the distant past, have worked to make Mississippi unattractive to many young people today. If we are to change these policies and make Mississippi a state that can draw in outsiders and hold its own young people, we must learn from the mistakes of the past so that we can avoid them in the future.

In its extended treatment of sharecropping, *Conflict and Change* has a section headed, "The Great Migration Begins":

> The sharecroppers' problem seemed impossible to solve. When World War I began, new factories opened in Northern cities. Mississippians, black and white, moved northward. After the war, the continuing problems of sharecropping and segregation caused blacks to continue to leave. This migration provided the main outlet for black frustration and protest, and it is still going on.

Later, regarding farm mechanization, one reads of the period after World War II, "With the end of chopping and picking on the cotton farms, sharecropping was dead. Plantation owners replaced man and mule power with much more efficient machine power. The displaced sharecroppers and small farmers had to move to cities in and outside the state to find work."

On "Mississippi's Continuing Economic Problems":

> Despite efforts by state leaders, hundreds of thousands of sharecroppers and independent farmers have left Mississippi to find better jobs in other states. And the sad fact is that the state still has too many poor people. The South is poorer than the North or the Far West, and within the South, states vary widely. Mississippi is at the bottom.

Discussing the possible directions Mississippi could take in the future *Conflict and Change* concludes:

> Several possible futures face Mississippi. You, young people, will go where you can be free—free from racism, free to choose your own occupation even if it is unusual, free to participate in many kinds of cultural and sports events. Your generation has in its hands the power to permit Mississippi to develop this freedom and this diversity, or to deny it. You can and you will choose a future—not only for yourself, but for your state. The lessons from the past can guide you, if you continue to learn from them.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

Bettersworth's treatment of industrialization is as summary and rosy as his handling of migration. For instance:

> World War II brought tremendous strides in all phases of Mississippi's economic life. . . . During the wartime boom from 1939 to 1947, the number of manufacturing establishments in Mississippi increased by 61 percent. Factory employment rose by 47 percent. At the same time the income of industrial workers increased by 286 percent. Meanwhile, agricultural income rose by 327 percent, and bank deposits increased by 240 percent. Although farm income later declined, the general economic level remained high, and industry continued to expand. . . .
>
> Mississippi's farms and factories thrived. To a great extent the improved living conditions of Mississippians was the result of improved education.

Conflict and Change is more realistic on the subject and discusses factors which have inhibited the growth of industry in Mississippi:

> As Mississippi's economy has grown, workers have not always shared fully in its benefits. Organized labor in Mississippi has historically been weak. In fact, some companies have moved to Mississippi in order to avoid paying higher wages and fringe benefits that labor unions try to win.
>
> In good years such as 1968 or 1970, more industries came to the state than in 1967. In 1972, Mississippi achieved a great advance in new industrial construction. But even in good years, Mississippi usually gains fewer jobs than does Arkansas, one of the nation's poorest states. What is wrong? Why don't more industries develop in or come to Mississippi? . . .
>
> Many of the industries which have come to Mississippi have been in low-paying fields such as lumber, clothing and paper. Therefore the average wage paid to Mississippi's industrial workers is much lower than the national average. The state needs more high-skill, high-wage jobs, and it is not getting them fast enough.
>
> Poor education may be a key reason. An uneducated worker is usually able to get only a low-paying, unskilled job. Mississippi is now the only state in the nation without a compulsory school-attendance law. In 1970, 40 percent of the adults in the state had less than a ninth-grade education.

Facing up to Problems

Bettersworth views issues such as race, migration and industrialization through rose-colored glasses—omitting the events and ignoring the analysis which would contradict his general theme of "boosterism." *Conflict and Change* does not view Mississippi history through a glass darkly, but rather presents the good and the bad in an objective analysis, challenging Mississippi students with an honest portrayal of the problems and promise of their state.

CIVIL RIGHTS ERA 1954-1970's

Bettersworth's coverage of the civil rights struggle is distorted, both by commission and omission. After maintaining, in chapter 11, that the searing conflict of 1860 was not civil war but a "War between the States" or a "war for Southern Independence," the author calls the struggle for civil rights the "civil-rights war." Before remarking on this "war," he assures the reader that, "gradually Mississippians, black and white, found that they could get along together—as they always had." Why, if Black and white "always had" related harmoniously, was there a "civil rights war"?

His answer appears to be—outside forces—particularly the Federal Government. Bettersworth fails to cite a single civil-rights act by Black Mississippians prior to 1965. He merely notes that in that year "Federal voting registrars moved into the state to help register black people to vote. [Why they were needed is not mentioned.] Civil rights marches and boycotts followed." The clear implication is that the marches and boycotts (by unspecified people for unspecified reasons) resulted from the presence of Federal registrars.

Supreme Court Intervenes

In a paragraph headed "Resistance," one reads that, "After the Supreme Court's desegregation decision of 1954, Mississippians took vigorous measures to resist." [See Parallel Quotes #15] Resistance took the form of establishing the White Citizens' Council (1954) and the State Sovereignty Commission (1956) "to take the Mississippi case to the rest of the nation." (In both these quotes it is clear Bettersworth means *only* white Mississippians.) We never are told what these groups did—only that they were established. White violence against the civil rights movement is minimized. In 1962 a "riot followed" James Meredith's admission to the University of Mississippi by Federal marshals. Who rioted is not spelled out. "A Mississippian" was tried for the murder of Medgar Evers, but not convicted. Three civil-rights workers in Neshoba County were murdered. Names of victims or killers are not given, no responsibility assigned, no questions raised about the response (or lack thereof) of state institutions to this violence.

Touching briefly on a few isolated incidents, Bettersworth concludes his cursory treatment by writing that William Waller, elected as governor in 1972, pioneered in appointing Blacks to office and that "one of his first moves was to desegregate the Highway Patrol." He fails to mention a 1971 court order to desegregate the Patrol. [See Parallel Quotes #16]

Most of the scanty information presented on the civil rights era is not offered in a section dealing with this critical period in Mississippi and national history, but is wedged into a listing of Mississippi governors from 1946-1970. For example, the 1954 Supreme Court decision is found in a section discussing the term of Governor "J. P. Coleman." While Bettersworth's entire treatment of the *Brown* decision consists of, "In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of public schools," he informs us that Coleman "took an active part in the National Democratic Convention of 1956. He worked hard to keep together the badly divided Democratic ranks. . . . After his term ended, Coleman served one term in the legislature. In 1957 he was appointed judge of the Fifth District of the U.S. Circuit Court." Such information is what Bettersworth and the State Textbook Committee feel is essential for Mississippi students to understand the state's past and present, and to construct its future.

Wishful History

The author's coverage of the civil rights struggle would be grossly inadequate even for a U.S. history textbook published in 1965. For a book about Mississippi, revised in 1975, the failure to present the enormous conflict and change that Mississippi experienced during the civil rights struggle is inexcusable.

In comparison, *Conflict and Change* provides a 35-page analysis of "The Struggle for Civil Rights" from 1954-1967 (chapter 15), and nine pages (in chapter 16) devoted to relations between the races from 1967 to 1973. Race is also discussed as it relates to other issues in other sections of the book dealing with this period. Some of the subheadings of chapter 15 convey a sense of the chapter's coverage: "Segregation of the Races," "Brown v. Board of Education," "White Reaction to the Supreme Court Decision," "Black Reaction to the Decision," "Citizens' Council Pressure," "White Opposition to the Councils," "The State Government and Segregation," "Black Voting Is Cut," "Mississippi's Anti-Integration Laws, 1956," "Violence Against Blacks," "Whites Oppose Black Registration," "The Freedom Riders," "Meredith and Ole Miss," "The Movement in the Delta," "The Freedom Summer of 1964," "Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman," "The Violence Spreads," "'Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired' [Fannie Lou Hamer]" "White Mississippians Work for Progress," "Token Desegregation in the Public Schools" and many, many more. Students might receive a broader understanding of this era if they read only these subheadings than they would by reading *all* of Bettersworth's discussion of the period.

OTHER RACIAL & ETHNIC GROUPS

Conflict and Change contains a number of references to the diverse ethnic and racial groups living in Mississippi, in addition to Afro-Americans and Native Americans. French-speaking, Yugoslav, Lebanese, Greek, Italian, Chinese, Mexican, Filipino, Irish, Jewish and Syrian peoples are cited. Mennonite, Greek Orthodox and Baha'i groups are also mentioned. A helpful chronology of events in the back of the book contains the following notes: "1870—Chinese first came to Mississippi," "1885—First Italian settlement in the Delta," and "by 1952—Chinese are admitted to white public schools throughout the state." The book notes that Mississippi has a larger Chinese American population than any other Southern state, that the Chinese first entered the state as sharecroppers brought in by planters who wanted to threaten their Black laborers with replacement, and that the state had the first Chinese American mayor in the country. It also notes that most of the above groups—specifically Chinese, Mexican and Italian Americans—were discriminated against. Some Delta towns operated separate, and unequal, schools for Chinese Americans along with the separate white and Black school systems.

Bettersworth provides less information on the diversity of Mississippi's population. He does mention, in a discussion of the Gulf area, the "strong Latin character" of people there who are descendants of early French, Spanish and Latin American settlers. Dalmatians from eastern Europe and Irish immigrant day laborers are also mentioned. He notes that "a number of Chinese came" as well as "a number of Italian immigrants," but of both groups he mentions only that they became merchants. Finally, he says ". . . the Jews built the state's first synagogue at Woodville in 1866."

WOMEN

Both books have a tendency to use "he," "man" or "men" when referring to people of both sexes. *Conflict and Change* makes an attempt to overcome this terminology, but lapses occur much too often. Both make references to the establishment of schools for women. Both refer to women in cultural fields. But there the similarity ends.

Conflict and Change mentions women in the general text and specific sections discuss women's roles and issues during various historical periods. Pictures and illustrations throughout the book portray specific women or depict women participating in activities under discussion or in scenes of everyday life.

Until the last chapter, on culture, which contains four pictures of specific women, women rarely appear in *Your Mississippi*. The most prominent illustrations show white mistresses on plantations—one teaching "house servants" to read and the other watching Black people toiling in a field.

Bettersworth's treatment of Native American women includes: "Natchez Indians usually paid little attention to their women," "Natchez women were busy housewives," and "[Choctaw] Women usually became fat as they grew older." While both books mention the sending of women to the French colony to marry bachelors, their different treatment of the subject is illuminating. [see Parallel Quotes #1]

Southern Belles

Bettersworth tells us that at the 1861 secession convention, "Eager onlookers, many of them ladies, filled the galleries . . . [and a] group of Jackson ladies presented a blue flag with a white star to the convention." The book's only example of decisive action by women during the war describes how women in Jones County, an area of anti-confederate/anti-war activity, killed bloodhounds being used to track their men by feeding them meat

sprinkled with red pepper. In a paragraph headed "Making Do," Bettersworth quotes a verse from a song sung by "Southern women" and then tells how "Southern people" made substitutes for scarce products. *Conflict and Change* mentions the same substitutes, but states, "In all these processes, women took the major role. . . . white women had to supervise not only the home but in many cases the farm, plantation or business." The book then discusses other activities of "white" women in support of the war effort.

Bettersworth notes the work of Frances Willard in establishing the Women's Christian Temperance League the establishment of the Masonic Women's Auxiliary and of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Finally, he cites the two Mississippi women who were crowned "Miss America" in the late '50's. Nowhere does he focus on women's rights or women's roles in Mississippi in an enlightened manner.

Counting Women

In the section titled "Women in the Future of Mississippi," *Conflict and Change* asks students to:

> Skim earlier chapters and count the number of different women mentioned by name in each chapter. Has the number increased in recent years? In what fields have most of these women worked?
>
> Only four of the biographies in this book have been about individual women. Has the book therefore been guilty of discrimination against women? Or is there another explanation? Help remedy the lack of information on women by doing research on a leading Mississippi woman and writing a short biography of her. Skim the index for a subject, or choose someone from your own community.

The authors of *Conflict and Change* clearly attempted to give prominence to women's concerns and issues. While they surpassed *Your Mississippi's* treatment, much more should have been done. It is strongly urged that future editions of this textbook be revised to eliminate the too frequent use of "he," "man" and "men" when referring to people. It is also critical that more information be researched and presented on the activities of women in Mississippi's history. The book states that the "denial of political rights [by the Constitution of 1890] did not stop Mississippi women from being active citizens," yet too few examples of women as "active citizens" are provided. Inclusion of short biographies of Hazel Brannon Smith, Belle Kearney, Nellie Nugent Somerville, Bessie C. Alford and other women referred to in the book would foster greater understanding of women's activities during important periods of Mississippi's history, and of female involvement in the struggle for human rights.

ILLUSTRATIONS

One criterion of the State Textbook Commission states:

> Maps, graphs, charts, photographs, lined drawings, and other graphic representations should be related functionally to the content of the text. Illustrations should extend and expand the text, not merely echo what has been said in print.

Conflict and Change is generously interspersed with photographs, maps and graphs which are not only informative, but greatly add to the readers understanding and appreciation. Pictures contrast rich and poor homes as well as Black and white schools. They portray segregation, Jim Crow, lynching, violence, struggle, hope and progress. Numerous graphs provide statistics and information on income and educational disparity between Black and white, migration from the state, and other social phenomena. Maps are used to compare population density with the development of agriculture or industry, voting patterns, etc.

A "Timeline of Events, Governors, and Selected Statistics" at the back of the book gives a useful summary of information, and reflects the authors' efforts for a balanced presentation. "De Soto expedition encounters the Choctaws, the Chickasaws and the Natchez," while "the coastal tribes and the Natchez encounter LaSalle, Bienville, and other French explorers." Population figures are offered periodically. Figures up to the Civil War give the total population, the number of slaves in that total, with mention made of the fact that Indians were not counted. Figures after the Civil War alternate between listing total population including the number of whites in the total, and total population including the number of Blacks, with the notation that "Black Population figures include about 5,000 Choctaws, Chinese and others." Thus, for the period around 1960, the figures state: "Population: 2,178,000, including 921,000 blacks." For the period around 1970, the figures state: "Population: 2,217,000, including 1,393,000 whites." This is a small example of the thought invested by the authors of *Conflict and Change*, in an attempt to create a book relevant to all Mississippians.

Bettersworth's illustrations reflect and reinforce the omissions and distortions of his text. His entire book contains only two pictures of individual Black people—Leontyne Price and Charles Evers. Mayor Evers appears *without* a tie and jacket opposite a picture of Governor Waller, dressed in suit and tie! Would it have been too difficult to include pictures of Senators Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce, the only Black U.S. Senators during Reconstruction, among all the white politicians shown? The list of possibilities is long.

Through Whose Eyes?

Other illustrations in *Your Mississippi* are equally distorting and reflect Bettersworth's tendency to view Mississippi through white eyes, wearing rose colored glasses. They gloss over or omit the existence of conflict, inequities and social/economic diversity. Chapter 10, "Life In Old Mississippi" begins with an illustration showing a white mistress reading to Black "house servants" gathered contentedly about her. The caption reads: "On some plantations the mistress taught the house servants to read and write." While this may have been true on "some" plantations and in regard to some "house servants," the norm (and the law) forbade the education of Black people during slavery. Chapter 13, "Life After the Civil War," begins with an illustration of a "Cotton Plantation on the Mississippi," showing Black workers picking and hauling cotton, while a nicely dressed white couple stand idly watching. This pastoral scene of contentment and harmony could have easily been placed in earlier Bettersworth chapters dealing with slavery. Yet the text appearing directly below the picture states:

> When wars are over, people often talk about going back to "the good old days." In 1865 there were no good old days to return to, for the "Old South" was destroyed. Everyone had to begin again. People had to try new ways of living and making a living. Cotton was the one thing in the South that had not been defeated. But a new labor system had to be worked out.

The incongruity of this illustration with accompanying text clearly contradicts the requirement that illustrations be "related functionally to the content of" and extend and expand the text.

Bettersworth mentions the variety of housing styles in which Mississippians lived—e.g., "mansions for the rich, dogtrot houses for the common man, and cabins for the slaves." Yet in his entire book, there is not one picture of a dogtrot house, a sharecropper's shack or slave cabins. Rather, the nine scattered pictures of houses *all* reflect the housing of the wealthy; not once does the reader see housing lived in by common people. *Conflict and Change* also shows mansions, but these are balanced by numerous pictures that depict the variety of housing styles inhabited by common Mississippians.

WORDING

Conflict and Change continually notes the race of people being discussed, if their race was relevant to what transpired. It does not say "people" or "Mississippians" when it means white people only. If *Conflict and Change* means *white* people, it generally clearly states it. This is not an unimportant practice, for it adds greatly to the readers' understanding of what was happening—or not happening—to various people during the period being discussed.

Bettersworth's wording is interesting for the manner in which it qualifies or omits. He has a general tendency throughout the book to talk of "people" or "Mississippians" when actually referring to *some white* Mississippians. Excluded from consideration are those white and Black Mississippians who felt and acted differently. "In the 1830's, railroads were being built and cotton brought high prices. That was what people in the Cotton Kingdom cared about" or, "After the Supreme Court's desegregation decision of 1954, Mississippians took vigorous measures to resist." [See Parallel Quotes #s 4, 13, 14, 15]

His qualifying words add to this distortion. While there were *"a number of cases* of cruelty to slaves," "planters *often* neglected their own families to care for their costly slaves." Try reversing this to, "there was *often* cruelty to slaves" and in "*a number of cases* planters neglected their families." While "*Many* blacks" were the slaves of Cotton's kingdom, "the white man was its slave too." Try: "While Black people were Cotton's slaves, many white people were its slave, too." A final example from both books highlights the differing approaches: Bettersworth writes ". . . *many* black men lost their vote in the Constitution of 1890." *Conflict and Change* notes "the disfranchisement of *most* black and *many* white Mississippians."

FORMAT

The format of the two books distinctly differ and here again *Conflict and Change* is far superior. The book begins by discussing the uses of history and how we can learn from it; how knowing about the past gives us power or gives power to those who control what we know of it; and how historical perspectives are affected by the ideologies of the people writing the history. Readers are told that:

> In every time period, you will have to determine for yourself which persons and acts you admire and which you regret. People in any time period decide what actions and people in the past they consider heroic. Thus the list of history's heroes slowly changes. By studying the past, you can learn that some of the great figures of our state's history will no longer be labeled heroes by generations to come; others, now forgotten by history will be remembered for their courage and honor. . . .
>
> History is power. The people on top of society, those who determine its policies, know this. Therefore, they influence the way history itself is written. Poor people do not write history books. . . . The writers of history and of historical materials are usually members of the upper and middle classes of society, and so are their friends. Therefore, to some extent, historians may not tell what actually happened. They tell what they *think* happened . . . and . . . they may write history in such a way that their own status can be explained and defended. . . .
>
> In order to understand why Mississippi is as it is, you have to understand the past. . . . Do not let other people, including the authors of this book, tell you the answers. Figure them out for yourself.

Informative illustrations, graphs and maps are scattered throughout the text to further explain and amplify the material discussed. Short biographies are also interspersed to expand information on a period or individual being discussed. Marginal notations either capsulize material discussed in an adjoining paragraph, define terms used in the paragraph, or refer the reader to other related sections. Chapters end with annotated, supplementary reading lists which feature diverse viewpoints on particular topics (some of Bettersworth's writings are included).

Stimulating and challenging questions and suggested projects are interspersed with the text. For example, quotes from the majority and dissenting opinions in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* are given and students are asked to "Turn ahead to chapter 15, pages 250-1, and compare the reasoning in 1896 with the 1954 Supreme Court Decision. Which 1896 opinion—the majority or the dissent—was closer to the 1954 decision? Did separate facilities imply inferiority?" Such questions and thinking would be impossible with *Your Mississippi*, since no mention is made of *"Plessy"* (let alone quotes given from the majority and the dissent), and the 1954 *Brown* decision is noted in only one sentence.

In *Your Mississippi*, Bettersworth adheres to a linear, static design. The book is an almost unrelieved recitation of dates, governors and "non-issues" (such as the frequently discussed and overly detailed problems and progress of the state's highway system). The general tone is one of "boosterism," more rightfully found in a tourist guide or promotional sheet. The book utilizes the traditional end-of-chapter questions and activities, which seem designed more to induce rote responses and toward "make work" activities than to stimulate original thinking or challenge student's capabilities.

In keeping with Bettersworth's seeming obsession with highways, two examples of his "Things To Do" projects illustrate many of the others in the book.

> Things To Do
> 4. Find out what public transportation services are available in your area.
> 5. Make a report on the routes of the Interstate Highway System in Mississippi.
>
> Things To Do
> 4. The county-unit system of county road maintenance is strongly supported by the Mississippi Economic Council (the Mississippi Chamber of Commerce). Obtain data from the M.E.C. on this issue and discuss how the county unit would operate.

SUMMARY

To fully appreciate the positive and, in many ways, unique characteristics of *Conflict and Change*, you have to read it yourself. The book is not flawless, but is one of the best history textbooks to be found.

Your Mississippi is also worth reading as an example of "mythologized history." But it clearly fails to meet some of the Textbook Review Committee's major criteria, including:

The scope and sequence of materials should be consistent with the valid findings of recent research.

Whenever applicable, the content of texts should assure that the contributions of all ethnic groups at different socio-economic levels receive fair and equitable treatment.

Illustrations should extend and expand the text, not merely echo what has been said in print.

Suggested exercises and activities which help the student synthesize, review, and summarize the content should be included.

The content of each text should be accurate, valid and up to date.

Suggestions for study included in the text should not only promote an understanding of the materials presented but also should stimulate original thinking.

Conflict and Change provides an analysis of and abundant information about a complex and varied region of the U.S. While the history of Mississippi has been especially marked by the racism characteristic of the general American experience, that state is not unique in the need for its young people to understand their past and act upon their future. With the publication of *Conflict and Change*, publishers and writers have an advanced model to emulate when they produce American history textbooks. Parents, teachers and students should pressure them to take note.

GLOSSARY

PERSPECTIVE

All textbooks reflect—consciously or unconsciously—the viewpoint and interpretation of their authors. Thus, different books provide different interpretations of historical events. Historians and authors can try to provide a range of viewpoints and of information. Readers can try to evaluate which perspectives are dominant and which are neglected, and then develop their own interpretation of history.

Example: *"Much of the development accomplished in California was the work of the Spanish priest, Junipero Serra. In 1769 he founded the San Diego Mission, the first of nine he established."*
Discussion: This quote is based on records left by Serra and other Spaniards. There is much evidence that the Indians he impressed to do all the actual physical work considered themselves enslaved. Spanish records show that they frequently escaped and rebelled. If the Indians had written this quote, the word "development" might have read "destruction of our civilization."

MYTH

A myth is an ill-founded belief. In the U.S.A., as elsewhere, events that occurred were reported and recorded by those in power in society. Such one-sided, self-serving interpretations often do not reflect reality but are gradually accepted as the whole truth.

Example: *"There had never been a very active anti-Spanish movement in Puerto Rico, but the American troops were warmly welcomed anyhow. A leading citizen may have expressed the feelings of his people when he said simply, 'We are glad that the U.S. is to be our country.'"*
Discussion: There was a long history of activities and rebellions against Spanish rule, which had forced concessions from the Spanish. It is true many Puerto Ricans welcomed the U.S. troops. What is omitted here is that the troops were welcomed by people who expected the U.S. defeat of Spain to bring about the independence they sought. There is NO evidence that the people of Puerto Rico had any desire to be annexed to the U.S.

ETHNOCENTRISM

People often feel that their own group's values, culture and standards are superior to all others. They develop a perspective which judges other peoples' culture and customs as different from, and therefore inferior to, their own culture. Authors, historians and students can try to develop an understanding of other viewpoints, values and customs and recognize that all have legitimacy on their *own* terms. Judging other cultures by the standards of one's own culture is ethnocentric.

Example: *"The Mexican Government did not want to sell Texas or give it up. For this reason the Government passed a number of laws to control the American settlers. Americans could no longer bring slaves into Texas. Americans who moved to Texas were supposed to become Mexican citizens."*
Discussion: Was Texas Texas then, or was it Mexico? Mexico's motivations for passing these laws are not explored from the Mexicans' point of view. (For example, slavery had been abolished in Mexico in 1829.) The reader is left with the impression that the laws were passed solely as a defense against the immigrants. Also, most countries require that people who live in their lands permanently apply for citizenship.

EUROCENTRISM

Presenting information from the perspective of European Americans on this continent, authors often ignore the experiences, motivations, aspirations and views of people of color. To interpret the experiences and action of Euro-Americans and of people of color *only* from the perspective of Euro-Americans, and not give similar space and legitimacy to other perspectives, is Eurocentric.

Example: [concerning Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana] *"Like Henry the Navigator, Jefferson inspired discovery—but with a difference. . . . the President's aim was to spread representative government and the blessings of freedom."*
Discussion: The Euro-American viewpoint presented totally ignores the viewpoints of Native Americans whose territory was being traded and of slaves who were taken into those territories. How did *they* feel about "representative government and the blessings of freedom?"

DISTORTION

Authors often twist the meaning of history by slanting their presentation of facts. Whether or not this is done *intentionally*, the prejudice and ethnocentrism of authors results in a distorted view of history.

Example: *"Many former slaves—as well as white people—were supported by a new system of farming called share-cropping."*
Discussion: "Were supported by" is accurate for some rich white landowners. For the "many former slaves" this is a gross distortion. By their hard work, for which they received next to no remuneration, they supported the whites who took advantage of them. Many poor whites also were exploited by the share-cropping system.

OMISSION

One way of distorting history and maintaining myths is to omit certain information and viewpoints which do not support the author's views. Such omissions seriously distort a reader's understanding of events.

Example: *"During World War II almost all Japanese Americans in the nation were confined to concentration camps in the western part of the country."*
Discussion: Older textbooks generally omitted descriptions of Japanese internment. Newer texts report it, and the text quoted above gave a detailed description of the unfairness and illegality involved. What is

GLOSSARY

Omission (continued)
common in this, and in most of the new texts, is the omission of the fact that German Americans and Italian Americans were not interned despite the fact that the U.S. was fighting Germany and Italy, as well as Japan. This omission is racist, as is omitting the mention that the atom bomb was not dropped on any white enemy nation.

STEREOTYPE

An untruth or oversimplication about the traits and behaviors common to an entire people is a stereotype. The stereotype is applied to each member of the group, without regard to that person's individual character. Authors, like other people, often believe stereotypes common within their own culture. Such stereotypes then distort what they report about particular groups of people.

Example: *"Among black men, physical prowess was generally held in higher esteem than mental skills."* or *"In the old North West, the Indians were active with tomahawks and scalping knives. . . ."*
Discussion: Were Black men really polled to see that most held "physical prowess in higher esteem than mental skills?" Or is this a racist stereotype about the mental inferiority of Blacks? The stereotype of Indians with "tomahawks and scalping knives" has long been a white fixation. (Very few books tell their readers that scalping was a practice introduced by Europeans who wanted proof of a "dead Indian" before paying rewards they routinely offered to murderers of Indians.)

CHARACTERIZATION

Many words and descriptions are commonly used to create negative images of groups of people. The use of such characterization reinforces stereotypes. Examples of such words are: savage, lazy, massacre, primitive, warlike, squaw, crafty, inscrutable, scatterbrained, greasy, gossipy.

Example: *"Americans believed that, if war came, these tribesmen, bribed by the English, would ravage the frontier regions and massacre the women and children."*
Discussion: Attach the adjectives (listed in words that characterize) to the specific group of people they have traditionally been applied to. Since most people would make the same associations (i.e., inscrutable Asian), we can assume that most people have been exposed to the same stereotyped characterizations.

BIAS

A highly personal and unreasoned distortion of judgment. To the extent that textbooks reflect the perspectives, ethnocentrism and stereotypes of the authors, they are biased.

Example: *"Most white Southerners and many Negroes scorned the carpet-baggers. Some responsible Negroes tried to warn their neighbors against associating with unscrupulous carpet-baggers."*
Discussion: What is the perspective? Why is this ethnocentric? What value-laden adjectives are give-aways about the bias of the author?

RACISM

Racism is an attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their color. In the U.S. today, only whites can be racist since they control the institutions which have the power to oppress people. Textbooks have always been one form of that oppression, since our textbooks are generally written by and published by whites and overrepresent the perspectives and the biases of white historians.

Example: All of the above examples demonstrate white racism.
Example: *"The colonist on the Frontier had to clear his own land, build his own house, and help to defend his home and his village against Indian attack."*
Discussion: Outside of the fact that Indians were defending *their* homes and homelands from white invasion, the quote totally ignores the females who were involved in all of the activities mentioned.

SEXISM

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination against women. Sexism is any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their sex. Since most authors, editors and historians are and have been male, they reflect the perspective that male activity is most important and that the viewpoint and actions of females are of little consequence. U.S. institutions have alway been controlled by males and have been run for the advantage of males.

Example: *"Today Americans look every year for new and improved models of cars, refrigerators, hair dryers, and many other conveniences. The first Americans, on the other hand, possibly waited a thousand years or more for the bettering of the single instrument on which their lives depended."*
Discussion: The implied judgment in the above says, "Look how much better our way of life is, compared to that of the first Americans." It implies, as well, that the Indians didn't try very hard, when it came to improving their own lives. It is judging another people's ancient civilization by the standards of our own present situation. A double whammy.

•**Note:** All quotations in the "Examples" were taken from *The Free and the Brave*, Rand McNally & Co., *Rise of the American Nation*, Harcourt, Brace, *History of a Free People*, Macmillan-Collier or *The Challenge of America*, Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

PARALLEL QUOTES: and Questions

I

Your Mississippi

A WOMEN'S REBELLION. In the summer of 1704, twenty-three young girls arrived in Louisiana under the care of two nuns. Within a month all of the girls were married except one, who was described as being "unusually coy and hard to please." Apparently these girls were brought to Mobile with false promises, and in 1706 they put on a "petticoat insurrection." They threatened to go home because they were having to eat cornbread instead of wheat bread. But how would they catch a ride? Not finding a way home, the rebels soon gave up and settled down to life in the Louisiana colony.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

Women came to Mississippi from the very beginning. Law arranged with orphanages to send "casket girls," with their belongings packed in small trunks called *cassettes*. They were quickly married to the bachelors in the Louisiana colony. Their life was much harder than it had been in France, however, and at one point, to protest their living conditions, they staged a "petticoat rebellion."

1. Did the women have legitimate grievances?
2. Do these books treat the women with respect or make light of their concerns?
3. Is the statement that one of the women was described as being "unusually coy and hard to please" necessary?
4. Why does each book put "petticoat rebellion" or "insurrection" in quotes?

II

In 1812 the United States went to war with England over freedom of the seas. In the Mississippi Territory the War of 1812 was mainly an Indian war. Westerners had known for some time that their Indian troubles were caused by the English. In 1811 the Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh, attempted to organize the western Indians against the United States. He visited the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, the Creeks, and the Seminoles to get their help. . . .

When war was declared against England on June 1, 1812, the Mississippi Territory was ready for trouble with the Indians. It was not long in coming. . . . On July 27 the Indians won in the Battle of Burnt Corn. With fresh supplies from Pensacola, the Creeks then prepared to attack American outposts in the border area. Their next move was a massacre at Fort Mims on August 30.

WHITE PRESSURE AGAINST THE INDIANS. Gradually, from the settlements along the Mississippi River, the Gulf Coast, and the Tombigbee River near the coast, more and more white settlers and black slaves moved north. Other pioneers trickled into Chickasaw and Choctaw land over the Appalachian Mountains to the east. Many Indians came to feel that the whites were threatening their identity and independence. They knew that other Indian tribes on the Atlantic Coast had been destroyed or pushed off their homelands, and they wanted to avoid such a fate.

In 1811, the great Shawnee chief Tecumseh journeyed through the old Southwest, urging all the Indian tribes to join his plan to unite and drive out the whites. . . .the Choctaws and Chickasaws decided not to join Tecumseh [but he] did persuade some Creek Indians in Alabama and Georgia to attack the settlers to the west. This war, actually part of the War of 1812, was called the Creek War in the Mississippi Territory. It began with the Creek assault on the Fort Mims settlement in August, 1813.

1. Which quote makes a better attempt to present the viewpoint and concerns of many Indians?
2. Is it correct to say that the British were the cause of "Indian trouble"? What does that imply about the Indians?
3. If the U.S. was fighting England for freedom of the seas, what were Indians fighting the U.S. for?
4. What impressions of Tecumseh do you get from each book?
5. One book uses the term "massacre" and the other the term "assault." What does each term imply?

	Your Mississippi	Mississippi: Conflict and Change
III	WILLIAM JOHNSON. One of the leading free blacks in Mississippi was William Johnson. He began as a barber at Port Gibson and moved to Natchez in 1830. He soon owned three barber shops. He also ran a toy shop and a Drayage (Hauling of goods) business and even operated a small loan service. He lived in a predominantly white neighborhood and went fishing and hunting with white friends. He sometimes even loaned them money. He also owned fifteen slaves. Though a free black such as Johnson might be respected in a certain community, such was always the exception, not the rule.	William Johnson, a free black in Natchez, was an exceptional man. The son of a black woman and a white man, Johnson regularly did business with whites and became quite wealthy. He owned over 1,000 acres of land and eight slaves and operated three barber shops. In 1851 Johnson was murdered by a white man. His murderer was never convicted because the only witnesses—blacks—could not testify in court against a white.

1. Is it important to know that Johnson was the son of a black woman and a white man?
2. From which book's treatment of Johnson's experience do we learn more about Johnson? about Mississippi society at that time? about race relations? about legal standards? about social relations? about the treatment of "free" Black people?

IV	While governor [1844-1848], Brown led a fight for the creation of a strong public school system.	In his successful campaign for governor, Brown pushed for public education for whites, saying that the education of its people ensures the safety of a government.

1. If Brown's fight was for a strong public education system for whites, is it important to state it?
2. What perceptions might result if this is not stated? What perceptions might result if it is stated?

V	*The Blacks in Wartime.* The Civil War was a perfect time for slaves to revolt. Yet, they never did. In many cases the slaves actually kept the plantations going while their masters were fighting.	*Blacks During the War.* Some slaves remained loyal to their owners throughout the war. Some even went off to war as servants of Confederate officers. But long before the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union Army had been freeing blacks, and blacks had been taking their own freedom. For white Mississippians, the usual fears of slave rebellion increased enormously. They tried to counter these fears by isolating blacks from outside news and restricting them to the plantations. By September 1861, there were reports of plots in the river counties. In July 1862, the provost marshal of Natchez reported hanging 40 blacks during the preceding year. In 1863, a group of blacks in Lafayette County revolted, drove off their overseers, and divided their master's property among themselves. Confederate troops put down slave rebellions near Holly Springs and in Amite County.

1. Do these quotes represent differing interpretations of history or conflicting facts about historical events?
2. How might it serve the viewpoint of one or both books to present false information? What impressions do each of the quotes leave with the reader?
3. Is the difference important?

Your Mississippi

VI General Grant set up a black farming area south of Vicksburg at Davis Bend. Several plantations, one of which had belonged to Jefferson Davis, were turned over to blacks to cultivate. In 1865 the Davis Bend farmers made a profit of nearly $160,000.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

The government then tried a different type of colony. It began to give land to the freedmen to operate for themselves. This bold idea could have revolutionized the South and changed the entire course of Reconstruction. . . . By the end of 1863, some 1,000 blacks had gathered at Davis Bend. . . . Seventy able men were given 30 acres apiece. A black regiment protected them. Despite Confederate guerrillas and pressures from Northern businessmen, they did very well.

Military authorities were so impressed that they expanded the program for 1865. Five thousand acres were divided among more than 1,800 blacks organized into 181 associations or companies. Each company had to pay for all equipment and supplies advanced by the government. Several blacks opened general stores. They formed a school board and in May 1866 established a school. A system of self-government was set up, including a sheriff and judge in each district. Free medical services were provided to all who could not afford a regular physician.

The system was an astounding success. The year 1865 was a good one for cotton, and by its end the colonists had sold over $400,000 worth of cash crops. After paying their expenses, they cleared nearly $160,000, an average of $880 per company.

If the Davis Bend experiment had been allowed to continue, it might have offered a real solution to the problem of securing political and economic rights for newly freed black Mississippians. Instead, the postwar government under President Johnson chose to appeal to the former leaders of the Southern states, and returned their lands to them. The era of Reconstruction was at hand.

1. Each quote states that the Davis Bend experiment was successful in terms of profit. Yet one provided a great deal more information. Was Davis Bend important enough to our understanding of Reconstruction to give it more or less information? Why?
2. What impression is left for the reader by minimizing the information? By maximizing the information?
3. Did the freedpeople have any rights to land that "belonged" to plantation owners? Why?

VII The black man came to expect more than the bureau could provide. He was told that the government would provide him with "forty acres and a mule" to get started on his own farm. Therefore, it became difficult for planters to get workers.

Without land, black farmers had no economic power. They became victims of the sharecropping system. The federal government, which had given so much land to Western railroads and settlers, left the Southern freedmen at the mercy of their former owners.

The Freedmen's Bureau also had the authority to distribute land that had been seized or abandoned. Many freedmen came to expect "40 acres and a mule." But President Johnson destroyed this crucial land reform program.

1. Are Black women discussed in these quotes or is it an assumption? How could both be rewritten to include Black women?
2. Could the Freedmen's Bureau have provided more?
3. Why does land provide economic power? Why is economic power important?
4. Whose land had been given to western railroads and settlers? Why was the Federal government willing to take over and give away some people's land and not others?
5. What does this tell us about who the Federal government was concerned about?

Your Mississippi

VIII The legislature also passed what was called a Black Code. This was a group of vagrancy laws designed to force people without jobs to go to work. The laws were patterned after similar ones in the North; yet, to many it seemed that the Mississippi legislature was attempting to revive slavery.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

The legislature then passed a series of laws which came to be known as the "Black Code." The code granted certain rights to the newly freed people. They could sue and be sued in the state courts, their testimony would be accepted in state courts, their marriages were legalized (with separate records to be kept), and they might own personal property.

However, black people faced serious controls under the code. The law provided for the "binding out" of young black children as apprentices. Former owners of the children were given first choice. Blacks had to have a home or a job by January 1, 1866, or be fined as vagrants. If they could not pay the fine, they were "hired out" with former owners given the first option. Blacks had to have licenses to do certain jobs, they could not own guns, and they could not rent land except in towns. It was illegal for blacks and whites to marry each other. . . .

Defenders of the code said it was patterned after prewar Northern laws dealing with free blacks. They denied that the legislature was trying to re-enslave blacks. The code was necessary, its defenders said, to force blacks to work.

Regardless of their intentions, the legislators made sure that blacks were kept down, socially and economically. As the Jackson *Daily News* said: "We must keep the ex-slave in a position of inferiority. We must pass such laws as will make him feel his inferiority."

1. What do you think the Code was meant to do?
2. What reasons might one book have for giving so little information on the Code? Whose interests did it serve to establish the Code rather than other alternatives?

IX The constitution brought some major changes in Mississippi. First of all, it set up a public school system under a state superintendent. It was generally agreed that these schools would be SEGREGATED (set apart for whites and blacks). The constitution also took steps to protect married women's property rights. The state office of Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture was established, and the office of lieutenant governor was set up. The governor's term was changed from two to four years. The governor was also allowed to appoint most of the state judges. This was a step backward from the 1832 constitution, in which Mississippi had led the country by making judges run for office.

The 1868 Mississippi Constitution was patterned after state constitutions of Northern states. It was more democratic than Mississippi's Constitution of 1832. It declared that all persons residing in Mississippi who were citizens of the United States were citizens of the state and had equal civil and political rights. Citizens were given the rights of trial by jury and freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition. There were to be no property qualifications for jury service, holding office, or voting.

The constitution provided for a system of free public education. The state legislature was apportioned on the basis of total population. There was to be no discrimination in the use of public facilities, and every citizen had the right to travel on public conveyances. As A.T. Morgan, one of the delegates in the 1868 convention, wrote: "This new constitution dodged nothing. Under its provisions the Negro was a man, and all men were to be equal in their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

1. The Reconstruction Constitution of 1868 was established by a convention composed of delegates chosen in an election in which Black men were able to vote. Which book gives you a greater understanding of what the new Constitution was meant to do?
2. Did the provisions of the Constitution improve the rights of just one group, or did it affect a number of groups?
3. One book quotes a delegate to the convention as saying that under the new constitution "all men were to be equal. . . ." What about women? Does either book provide us with enough information about the old or new status of women?

Your Mississippi

X

[The Legislature] spent a great deal of money. The total cost of the state government in 1870-1871 was nearly $2.8 million. . . . Laws were passed to set up the new public school system and to provide state aid for industry and railroads. Taxes were increased so much that rich property owners began to complain.

The Taxpayers Revolt. Financial problems did much to cause the downfall of Republican rule in Mississippi. By the time Ames became governor, the legislature had put state finances in a serious condition. Expenditures rose and taxes increased. . . . By 1874 taxpayers were ready to revolt. Vicksburg and Warren County were scenes of the first incidents. Both city and county governments were thought to be CORRUPT (guilty of dishonest practices). Most of the city and county offices were held by blacks. Since whites paid ninety-nine percent of the taxes, they were very unhappy. The city and county debt, which had been only thirteen thousand dollars in 1869, had climbed to $1.4 million for Vicksburg alone by 1874.

The whites in Vicksburg organized a Taxpayers League to defeat the black city government in the fall elections.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

. . . Alcorn increased government services. The new administration rebuilt railroads, bridges, and public facilities; repaired levees; and built schools, hospitals, and insane asylums. Therefore government expenses rose. In addition, there were now more citizens to be served [slaves were now citizens].

While black voters had influence, they did not control the state government. No black was ever elected governor, and the state's delegation to Congress was always predominantly white.

Many of the black leaders in Mississippi were educated; several were college graduates. Those who were honest and able were usually supported by both white and black voters. They were reasonable in their use of political power and in their actions toward white Mississippians. All they asked was equal rights before the law. On the whole, Mississippi was especially fortunate in having capable black leaders during these years.

In the summer of 1874, "Taxpayers' Leagues" were organized. Opponents of Republican rule complained of the high costs of government and high taxes. Republicans pointed out that demand for government services was great, Mississippi was in better financial condition than other Southern states, and the county tax rate was higher in many Democratic counties than in Republican counties.

Some writers claimed that all Reconstruction governments in the South were corrupt. It is true that some white Republicans stole; so did some black officials, and so, indeed, did some white Democrats. Vernon Wharton, an authority on Reconstruction, found no difference between Democratic and Republican counties in this regard. There were no major scandals in Mississippi during Reconstruction; major embezzlements of funds by state treasurers occurred in 1866, 1890, and 1902, all by Democratic officials.

1. Each book presents different information on the effectiveness of the Reconstruction government. What is each book trying to support in terms of: the need for increased expenditures? capabilities of Black people? degree of Black control of government?
2. Which provides a more realistic understanding of the reasons for conservative resentment of Reconstruction government?

XI

A secret organization, known as the Ku Klux Klan, began to terrorize blacks. The Klan began as a secret social and fraternal club. Such organizations were very popular at that time. The initiation of a member required him to ride across the countryside in bedsheet and hood to serenade his best girl. This frightened the blacks. Taking advantage of this fear, the Klan turned into a force for controlling the freedmen, especially to frighten them away from voting places . . . the only real restraint upon Klan activities came from public opposition to many of its methods. As time passed and the Klan became more violent, Southern leaders withdrew their support from the movement.

A major problem of the Alcorn administration was the terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan. Organized in Pulaski, Tennessee, in December 1865, the Klan became an instrument of terror throughout the South. Its stated purpose was to promote white supremacy and to "preserve the Southern way of life." There were secret handshakes and other signs of recognition. The elaborate rituals and oaths appealed to many whites.

Blacks and white Republicans were beaten and some times killed. The Klan burned a number of black schools and churches. . . . As the Klan's violence increased, moderate whites withdrew from it, but many whites and a few blacks continued to harass blacks and white Republicans. Other groups such as the Knights of the White Camellia, the Sons of Midnight, and the White League, continued to ride throughout the Reconstruction period.

1. What understanding does each book give us of the reasons for the organization of the Klan? Which tells us more about its activities?
2. Can you find a stereotype about Black people in one of the quotes?
3. One book says that as Klan violence increased, Southern leaders withdrew, while the other says that moderate whites withdrew. What is the difference in these two statements?

Your Mississippi

XII The years 1865 to 1890 saw great economic and social change. The New South was struggling to exist. Change was in the air. Factories and railroads were being built. Public schools and colleges were being built. Reform was in the air. Mississippians were concerned about public health and the treatment of convicts. There were also fairs, tournaments, bare-knuckle bouts, and performances at the opera houses. Also, Mississippians were still writing.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

Between the end of Reconstruction and the Constitutional Convention of 1890, many Mississippians faced poverty and disease. Farming was not paying off for most people. Children were growing up illiterate. Conservative leaders, however, seemed to be more interested in business matters—railroads, banks, and factories—than in social legislation. As the hard times of the 1880's grew worse, people lost confidence in their leaders.

Most black people faced economic and social conditions little better than those of slavery days. Blacks were still allowed to vote in most counties, but in fewer and fewer numbers as the years passed.

This period of conservative reaction had more lasting effects upon Mississippi than Reconstruction, for in these years the conservatives established practices in politics, law, economics, and race relations that still affect us today.

1. Which book more clearly reflects the reality of that time? Why?
2. What impression might each book be trying to create?

XIII THE GREAT FLOOD. The year 1927 was long remembered by Deltans. It was the year of the great flood. The Delta had suffered from floods even after levee construction began in the 1850s. But none of the floods was as terrifying as the torrent of water that came rushing through the broken levee at Scott in the spring of 1927.

President Calvin Coolidge sent Herbert Hoover to check on conditions in the flooded area. Meanwhile, generous federal and Red Cross aid poured into the Delta. After the flood a Waterways Experiment Station was set up at Vicksburg. This was a major flood-control activity under the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

. . . in 1927, the Mississippi's waters created one of the greatest disasters of our nation's history. . . .

. . . Of the 185,500 Mississippians flooded, 142,000 were black. Early in the disaster, while white women and children were taken to safety, black people had to stay in camps and work under the eyes of white administrators. LeRoy Percy, a Delta planter, explained why: "If we depopulate the Delta of its labor, we should be doing it a grave disservice."

Although blacks were asked and sometimes forced to unload the relief supplies, Red Cross aid was often channeled to white refugees only.

At one point, dissatisfied with their treatment, blacks refused to work. The National Guard was called in to force them back to work. . . .

1. What do you learn from one book that you don't learn from the other in terms of Mississippi society at the time of the flood?

XIV . . . The common man was choosing political leaders throughout the South. Many of these leaders were called DEMAGOGUES. This term originally meant "leader of the people." It became a "dirty word" to describe those who turned to the common man with persuasion and political promises to get elected.

Some leaders of the state took people's minds off these problems by raising emotional issues, such as fear of a black takeover. This type of politician, called a "demagogue," avoids the real issues and makes emotional promises to win votes. Impressed by the politician's personality, many people vote for him, but in the end, they still suffer from many of their old problems under the new politician.

Demagogue: politician who stirs up prejudice to win office or influence.

1. Look up the word demagogue in the dictionary. Which book's definition comes closer to the dictionary definition?
2. How might it serve an author's viewpoint to distort what the word means?

XV

Your Mississippi

After the Supreme Court's desegregation decision of 1954, Mississippians took vigorous measures to resist.

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

. . . Beginning in the summer of 1954, NAACP groups in Vicksburg, Jackson, Clarksdale, Natchez, and Yazoo City filed petitions asking school boards to take steps to comply with the Supreme Court decision. The regional Council of Negro Leadership called for "immediate opening" of the state's graduate and professional schools to all races.

While Mississippi's black leaders were moving to break down segregation barriers, the white community was discussing what it should do. . . .

1. *What does one quote assume in its use of "Mississippians"?*
2. *How does this distort what the reader perceives about the period?*

XVI

[William] Waller was the first governor since Reconstruction to make it a practice to appoint blacks to office. One of his first moves was to desegregate the Highway Patrol.

Owing to a 1971 court order, the highway patrol finally hired three blacks as patrolmen. Similar lawsuits hung over the Jackson fire department and several other state and local agencies.

1. *What information does each quote present? leave out?*
2. *What differing impressions result?*

For a free catalog listing many student and teacher materials for social study classes and for human relations training, write to:

The Racism/Sexism Resource Center,
Rm 300, 1841 Broadway,
New York, N.Y. 10023